

## Congressman Earl Blumenauer's 2008 Legislative Agenda

### *From the Desk of* CONGRESSMAN EARL BLUMENAUER

Dear Fellow Oregonian:

While we have been working very hard on moving America in a new and better direction, there is no question that this has been a very frustrating year in Congress. Yes, we have passed several very important bills to protect Americans. We have raised the minimum wage, increased assistance for students who are trying to go to college, passed the 9/11 Commission recommendations to make our country safer and invested in our infrastructure.

That is progress, but it isn't enough. While there are a number of important issues we are working on, over the next year I am going to be focusing my greatest efforts on what I believe to be the four most critical challenges facing our nation and our families:

- ◆ Change our direction in Iraq.
- ◆ Respond to the urgent threat of Global Warming.
- ◆ Provide every American family with health insurance.
- ◆ Ensure fairness for hardworking middle-class families.

One final note: I hope you will join me by keeping our servicemen and servicewomen in Iraq in our thoughts, and reaching out to their families here in Oregon. While I have opposed the war in Iraq from the very beginning, I am deeply grateful for the service and dedication of the men and women in our armed forces and the sacrifices that they and their families are making every day.

Please feel free to contact me with your ideas and comments, and please don't hesitate to contact my office if we can be of any assistance.

*Earl*



Look inside for details on these and other important issues.

### Earl wants to hear from you!

The best way to make sure your congressman understands your priorities and ideas is to tell him yourself. There are many ways to contact Earl:

Visit  
<http://blumenauer.house.gov>

**Portland Office**  
729 N.E. Oregon Street  
Suite 115  
Portland, OR 97232  
(503) 231-2300

To email Earl, please visit  
<http://blumenauer.house.gov/about/Contact.shtml>

**Washington DC Office**  
US House of Representatives  
2267 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4811

729 N.E. Oregon Street  
Suite 115  
Portland, OR 97232

*Earl Blumenauer*  
M.C.

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# IRAQ

# GLOBAL WARMING



# HEALTH CARE



# HELPING HARDWORKING FAMILIES



## It's time to move America forward.

Congressman **Earl Blumenauer**  
Representing Oregon's 3rd District



# 4 Critical Challenges

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Congressman Blumenauer testifies before the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming with Chairman Ed Markey.

While there are many issues we face as a nation, I believe there are 4 critical challenges that we must focus on to change direction and move America forward.

### 1 Changing Our Direction in Iraq and Standing up for Our Servicemen and Servicewomen

While I opposed the disastrous Iraq War from the beginning, I don't believe that simply opposing the war is enough. That is why I have introduced the **New Direction for Iraq Act**, which includes the following elements:

- ◆ **Requires the responsible redeployment of U.S. forces** from Iraq to start within 30 days of passage and be completed within approximately one year.
- ◆ **Prohibits the escalation of the Iraq War** without specific Congressional approval.
- ◆ **Prompts investigation and prosecution of war profiteering and fraud**, cancellation of contracts of non-performing companies and recovery of lost funds.
- ◆ **Requires the President and the Iraqi government to agree on performance benchmarks** and makes further support for the Iraqi government contingent upon the achievement of those benchmarks.

See the full details at <http://blumenauer.house.gov/issues>

As bad as the Iraq War is the way the Bush administration has neglected our returning veterans. I am working to provide veterans with improved scholarships and education loans and better medical care. I have also been instrumental in providing federal funding for the Oregon Veterans Home Loan Program. I am also working to ensure that our servicemen and servicewomen are not sent into an ill-conceived military action in Iran.

### 2 Addressing Global Warming and Protecting Our Environment

The latest United Nations report not only re-confirms the reality of global warming, but also delivers the sobering news that there is a consensus among scientists that it is happening more rapidly than we thought. As a longtime advocate for reducing polluting carbon emissions that contribute to global warming and harm our health, I have taken a leadership role as a member of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming. I am also an original co-sponsor of the "Safe Climate Act," which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

While global warming is our most urgent environmental issue, we must not overlook the current administration's unconscionable lack of oversight and accountability for those who pollute our water and air. I am sponsoring legislation that will restore the principal of "polluter pays": if you pollute it, you pay to clean it up.

### 3 Providing Health Coverage for Every American Family

Right now, we have a health care system that works far better for the insurance and pharmaceutical industries than it does for people. We spend more than any other nation on healthcare, yet our actual health outcomes are behind less developed countries that spend far less. Approximately 47 million Americans have no health coverage at all, and many who are insured can be in financial ruin if faced with a serious illness. This is irrational, immoral and must change. That is why I have co-sponsored the Healthy Americans Act, which would:

- ◆ guarantee private health care coverage for all Americans;
- ◆ provide health benefits equal to those that Members of Congress now enjoy;
- ◆ provide incentives for individuals and insurers to focus on prevention, wellness and disease management;
- ◆ establish tough cost containment measures that save \$1.48 trillion over 10 years; and
- ◆ be fully paid for with the \$2.2 trillion currently spent on health care in America today.

Under the Healthy Americans Act, health coverage would be portable. Insurance would also no longer be tied to employment. Individuals could keep the coverage they have as they move from job to job.

### 4 A Fair Deal for the Middle Class

I'm trying to correct the imbalance that has occurred due to the current administration's tax giveaways for the wealthy, unnecessary subsidies and lack of accountability for corporate wrongdoers. Here are some of the things I am working on to restore the balance:

**AMT Reform** The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) was originally designed to prevent the wealthy from avoiding income taxes. But because the amounts that trigger the AMT have not increased with inflation, fully one-third of Oregon taxpayers will be caught having to pay the higher AMT. The number of people paying the AMT would jump from 36,000 to almost 247,000. I am working to reform the system and prevent this from happening.

**Housing** I am working to help middle-class families cope with suspect subprime lending and the lack of affordable housing. I am helping lead an effort to ensure working families caught up in the housing crisis don't end up paying higher taxes because of mortgage forgiveness.

**Corporate Subsidies and Tax Giveaways** Massive subsidies and tax breaks to corporate America have become a real scandal. Look no farther than our agricultural policy, where money is shipped to corporate farming interests at the expense of family farmers and taxpayers. I am helping lead the effort to redirect aid to small and family farm operations like those that form the backbone of Oregon's agricultural economy.



Learn more about Congressman Blumenauer's 2008 Legislative Agenda and the additional issues that he is working on at <http://blumenauer.house.gov>